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PAGE 01 STATE 034077

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: BREAD AND PUPPET THEATRE

REF: ATHENS 1124 C

1. DEPT. HAS BEEN ADVISED BY ITS CONSULTANTS THAT BREAD AND PUPPET THEATRE PRODUCTIONS ARE ESSENTIALLY RELIGIOUS, HIGHLY MORAL MESSAGES DONE IN "SIMPLE TECHNIQUES DEvised BY A GENIUS., SINCE POLITICAL CONTENT WAS AIMED MOSTLY AT VIETNAM, IT MAY NO LONGER DOMINATE IN CURRENT WORKS. NO ONE HOWEVER HAS SEEN WORKS LISTED IN REFTel SINCE GROUP HAS BEEN OVERSEAS SINCE DECEMBER AND WILL NOT RETURN PRIOR TO ATHENS VISIT.

2. CONTEXT OF PIECES BASED ON BPT HANDOUTS FOLLOWS. THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS IS PASSION-PLAY AND PAGEANT. GROUP OF PUPPETS EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN FEET TALL TOGETHER WITH MAN
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PAGE 02 STATE 034077

AND ANIMAL MASKS OF ALL SIZES REAPPEAR THROUGHOUT VARYING

PRODUCTIONS OF EASTERN STORY. IN EACH COMMUNITY LOCAL SINGERS ARE CONTRACTED FOR CHORUS. NEW YORK TIMES REVIEW OF MAY 24, 1972 STATES "BREAD AND PUPPET THEATRE OFFERS INNOCENCE, SPIRITUALITY AND EXTROORDINARY THEATRICAL INGENUITY-THREE QUALITIES GREATLY IN EVIDENCE IN "STATIONS OF THE CROSS"..BEFORE THE PLAY THE STAGE IS FILLED WITH

LANDSCAPE OF TINY TOYLIKE MODELS, SOLDIERS WITH RIFLES RAISED, CITIZENS STRUCK DOWN...THERE ARE SEVERAL REPRESENTATIONS OF CHRIST INCLUDING, MOST IMPRESSIVELY, A SOARING 20 FOOT PUPPET...AT TIMES THE WORK IS LIKE A CHILD'S PLAY WITH CLOWN AND CIRCUS THATRICALITY, AND OCCASIONAL MOMENTS OF HUMOR...AURALLY AS WELL AS VISUALLY THE WORK IS STRIKING..."

3. DESCRIPTION OF BIG AMERICAN DANCE OF DEATH IS CONTAINED IN JULY-AUGUST NO. 49-50 ITI THEATRE NOTES. THIS IS "FUSION OF DANCE, CIRCUS, PUPPETRY." "PLAY IS COMPOSED OF SEVERAL THEMES THAT HAVE LONG PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN GROUP'S WORK: DEATH, WAR, THE PROSPECT OF FATALITY, THE HOPE FOR MODERN MAN IN GENERAL AND THE AMERICAN NATION IN PARTICULAR. WITH DRAGONS FLYING TO THE MUSIC OF 'AN INTERNATIONAL GARBAGEMAN ORCHESTRA,' THE BREAD AND PUPPET'S INTERPRETATION OF RITUAL DANCE MACABRE IS'NOT DARK BUT LIGHT, NOT GLOOMY BUT BRIGHT.'"

4. ACCORDING TO ITI ONLY BIG AMERICAN DANCE OF DEATH TOURING OVERSEAS RATHER THAN ALL THOSE LISTED REFTEL.

5. DEPT. WOULD APPRECIATE REPORT ON AUDIENCE AND POST REACTION TO THEATRE'S APPEARANCES.

6. COMPANY HAS JUST COMPLETED TOUR OF TUNIS, ALGERIA AND SOME CITIES IN ITALY. INFO POSTS MAY WISH TO SEND EVALUATION TO ATHENS WITH INFO CU/ARTS. KISSINGER

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